Giacomo Puccini ~ Messa di Gloria

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The concerts in the **UNESCO World Heritage Maulbronn Monastery**, which we document with this edition, supply the ideal conditions for our aspirations. It is, above all, the atmosphere of the romantic, candle-lit arches, the magic of the monastery in its unadulterated sublime presence and tranquillity that impresses itself upon the performers and audience of these concerts. Renowned soloists and ensembles from the international arena repeatedly welcome the opportunity to appear here - enjoying the unparalleled acoustic and architectural beauty of this World Heritage Site (monastery church, cloister gardens, lay refectory, etc.), providing exquisite performances of secular and sacred music.
Flourishing culture in living monuments, enthralling the audience and last but not least also you the listener are the values we endeavor to document in this series.

Andreas Otto Grimminger & Josef-Stefan Kindler

Stellen Sie sich vor, Sie leben im Italien des 19. Jahrhunderts, sind 22 Jahre alt und studieren am Konservatorium von Lucca - Musik. In wenigen Wochen legen Sie ihr erstes grosses Werk dem Gremium des Konservatoriums vor: die Abschlussarbeit, ein Glanzpunkt ihres blühenden Lebens...
Giacomo Puccinis „Messa di Gloria“ ist meineserachtens ein Höhepunkt innerhalb seines Schaffens - denn ist es wirklich „nur“ ein Frühwerk? Sicherlich, man spürt den Glanz, die Begeisterung und wohl auch ein wenig die Respektlosigkeit der Jugend - denn wissen Sie, für eine Messe ist dieses Werk zum damaligen Zeitpunkt einfach zu schön. Es spiegelt die volle Begeisterung und Hingabe des jungen Künstlers. Entgegen vieler Meinungen, die das „Gloria“ als Höhepunkt der Komposition sehen, ist für mich das „Agnus Dei“ der eigentliche Höhepunkt des Werkes, welches wohl nicht ohne Grund Jahre später in der Oper „Manon Lescaut“ fast unverändert wieder erscheint.

Josef-Stefan Kindler anno 2006

Obwohl die „Messa di Gloria“ von Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) den Musikwissenschaftlern seit geraumer Zeit bekannt war, taucht sie in den Konzertprogrammen erst seit kurzer Zeit auf. Die Partitur ging erst 1951 in Druck. Seitdem wird das Werk allgemein als „Messa di Gloria“ bezeichnet. Die erste Aufführung fand am 12. Juli 1880 anlässlich des Festes von San Paolino, dem Schutzpatron der Glocken, statt, der in dieser toskanischen Stadt besonders verehrt wird. Jene brachte dem jungen Komponisten allgemeine Anerkennung ein. Puccini hat in der Partitur der Messa zwei 1878 für den gleichen Festtag komponierte kirchenmusikalische Stücke verarbeitet: ein Mottetto und ein Credo. Die Komposition war ursprünglich als grosses Vokalwerk konzipiert. Die endgültige Besetzung ist jedoch für 2 Solostimmen, vierstimmi-

gen Chor und grosses Orchester. So ist die Messa die erste umfangreiche Arbeit Puccinis, in der der Komponist an die solide musikalische Tradition seiner Familie anknüpfend bewusst die modernen Ausdrucksmittel seiner Zeit verwendet. Der vertraute Umgang mit der festlichen Chormusik und den strengsten Formen des „eingehaltenen“ Kontrapunkts verbindet er mit einer persönlichen Auffassung von einem kirchenmusikalischen Stil und einer in ihren ursprünglichen Umrissen bereits festgelegten Empfindung für Melodien und schliesslich mit einem Klangstil, der schon die ausserordentliche Meisterschaft der späten Orchestration enthüllt. Puccini hing besonders an diesem Frühwerk. Anklänge an die Messa sind später in Puccinis Opern zu finden, besonders in Edgar und vor allem in Manon Lescaut. Im „Madrigale“ des 2. Aktes der Manon erscheint fast das gesamte „Agnus Dei“ mit nur ganz geringen strukturellen Veränderungen. Wenn man all dies in Betracht zieht, versteht man auch die hohe Achtung, die Puccinis Messa in jüngster Zeit entgegengebracht wird.

Imagine you are living in 19th century Italy, you‘re 22 years old and studying music at the Conservatory in Lucca. In just a few weeks you will submit your first big musical composition to the Conservatory‘s Board of Directors: your final year project for your degree, the highlight of your young life... As I see it, Giacomo Puccini‘s “Messa di Gloria” represents a high point in his creative work - because can you really say this is „only“ one of his early works? True, you sense the brilliance, the rapture and, indeed, a little of the lack of respect typical of youth – but in actual fact, this composition is simply too beautiful for a mass back in those days. It reflects the young artist’s total passion and dedication. Unlike many people who see the “Gloria” as the climax of this composition, I personally feel that the real climax is the “Agnus Dei”. And the fact that it reappears later - and almost unchanged - in the opera “Manon Lescaut” is surely no coincidence.

Although music scholars have been aware of the „Messa di Gloria“ by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) for a considerable time, the piece only began to appear in concert programmes relatively recently. The score was in fact not published until 1951. Since then the work has been known generally as the „Messa di Gloria“. It was first performed on July 12th,1880 at the Festival of San Paolino, the patron saint of bells, who is particularly revered in this part of Tuscany. This public performance brought the young composer general recognition. Puccini incorporated two other pieces of church music into the score of the Messa – a motet and a Credo that he had composed for the same festival in 1878. The entire composition had originally been conceived as a large choral work, but the final version is for two solo voices, a four-part choir and a large orchestra. The Messa is thus the first comprehensive work by Puccini to follow the solid musical traditions of his family and deliberately use the ‘modern’ methods of expression in vogue at the time. Puccini used his expertise in festive choral music and in adhering to the strictest conventions of counterpoint, and combined it with his own personal concept of a style for church and an innate feeling for melody that was present in him from the start. There is also a certain style to the sound that foreshadows the extraordinary mastery of orchestration apparent in his late works. Puccini was particularly fond of this early composition, proof that he attached particular importance to it. Echoes of the “Messa” reappear later in Puccini’s operas, particularly in “Edgar” and “Manon Lescau”t. In fact, the „Madrigale“ in Act 2 of Manon contains almost the entire „Agnus Dei“, with only very few structural changes. Bearing all this in mind, it is no wonder that Puccini’s Messa is so highly appreciated today.

1. Kyrie

Chor ~ Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison

2. Gloria

Chor ~ Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus
Tenor Solo ~ Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam
Chor ~ Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Pater omnipotens

3. Credo

Chor ~ Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotente...
Tenor Solo und Chor ~ Et incarnatus de Spiritu Sancto
Bass Solo ~ Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est
Chor ~ Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris

4. Sanctus

Chor ~ Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Domine, Deus Sabaoth

5. Benedictus

Bariton Solo ~ Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini

6. Agnus dei

Tenor/Bass Solo und Chor ~ Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis
Dona nobis pacem

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